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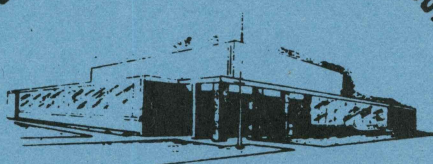
HISTORY

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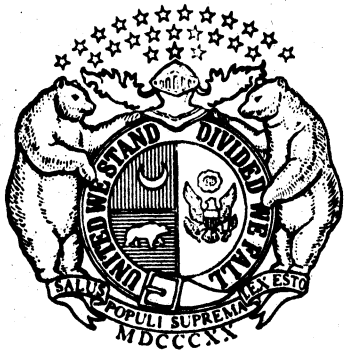
HIGGINSVILLE STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

1956 - 1976

HIGGINSVILLE STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

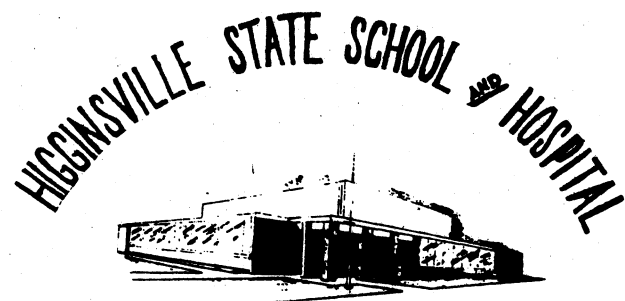


Missouri



Compiled and Written by
Katie Langdon
Community Relations Coordinator

July 1976



HIGGINSVILLE STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

June 1956

The Honorable James T. Blair
Governor

Mr. C. Rouss Gallup
Director of Public Health and Welfare

Mr. B. E. Ragland
Director of Division on Mental Diseases

Mr. Ralph McSweeney
Director of Public Buildings

Dr. George A. Johns
Superintendent, Missouri State School-Marshall

W. K. Prior
Business Manager, Missouri State School-Marshall

Angus McCallum, Architect
Kivett & Myers, Kansas City, Mo.

Ms. Ara L. Morris
Nurse-Administrator
Missouri State School-Higginsville

HIGGINSVILLE STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

June 1976

The Honorable Christopher S. Bond
Governor

Dr. C. Duane Hensley
Acting Director
Department of Mental Health

Mr. John Solomon
Acting Director
Section on Mental Retardation-Developmental Disabilities
Department of Mental Health

Ms. Ara L. Morris
Superintendent
Higginville State School-Hospital

Mr. Emil L. Lassa
Assistant Superintendent (Administration)
Higginville State School-Hospital

Mrs. Jo Ann Miller
Assistant Superintendent (Treatment)
Higginville State School-Hospital

HIGGINSVILLE STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

Original Employees

June 1, 1956

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| F. Phillip Voigt | Shirley Lampton |
| Ara L. Morris | Martha Foulds |
| Lois Carter | Teresa Kelly |
| Ida Edwards | Grace Kelly |
| Mayme Morgan | Edna Marguerite Thompson |
| Rose Lackey | Ann Lefman |
| Anna Steele | Lester Fowler |
| LaBerna Redhage | Amanda Petty |
| Anna Maring | Grace Riley |
| Lee Lampton | Pam Yates |
| Charles Shamel | Cora Heidbrink |
| Ted Kempf | Elizabeth Gassen |
| | Vernita Hurd |

HIGGINSVILLE STATE SCHOOL and HOSPITAL

1956 - 1976

Twenty years ago, this June, the doors of the Higginsville State School and Hospital opened, thus beginning a new era in care for Mentally Retarded-Developmentally Disabled residents of the State of Missouri.

The site of the Higginsville campus was formerly the Confederate Home, established by the state in early 1891 for the care of Confederate veterans and their families. In 1950 the last of the soldiers was laid to rest in the Confederate Memorial Cemetery, thus terminating the necessity for continued operation of the home. Many of the soldiers and their wives are buried in the Confederate Memorial Cemetery on the west side of today's campus. The State Legislature in 1925, set aside 92 acres of the home for a park site, a lasting memorial to the Confederate soldiers.

For quite some time, the State had been making plans to construct another facility for the care and treatment of its overpopulated mentally retarded. In 1953 the State Legislature appropriated funds to begin construction of what was to be the Higginsville unit of the Missouri State School. The school was originally established as part of the Marshall State School-Hospital, then called the Missouri State School at Marshall, and was to provide educational training for Marshall's more capable residents. Mr. W. K. Prior, then business manager of the Marshall school, writes about Higginsville's beginnings:

"With a waiting list of 800 and a population of over 2,000 patients crowded into the Marshall institution; where it was said

the beds in the dormitories were so close together one could ride a bicycle across them, the Governor and legislature recognized urgent action was necessary in order to alleviate and help correct this condition. The 67th General Assembly of 1953 appropriated \$1,000,000 to build a building or buildings suitable for housing 500 patients."

The State appointed an architect and a study was made to determine the best location for the school, which would be a sister-facility to Marshall. It was decided, after elimination of the Marshall and Carrollton sites, that the Confederate Home grounds at Higginsville would be the best option. Architect McCallum later won national recognition for his unique cottage-type design. The citizens of the city of Higginsville headed by Mr. M. D. Kirk, raised the money to raze the old Confederate Building and make room for the new construction. Four large buildings, the Superintendent's residence, women's residence, men's residents and commissary, were destroyed along with fourteen smaller cottages. The hospital and Chapel were left for future use by the State.

A thorough survey of similar State facilities was then begun by Architect Angus McCallum, Mr. B. E. Ragland, Director of the Division on Mental Diseases, and Mr. Prior: "We visited several institutions in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The institution at Southberry, Connecticut appeared to combine most features which were considered desirable and the architect incorporated some of these in his plans and drawings for Higginsville."

June 1956 saw the completion of two fire-resistant cottage-type buildings (A & B), a combined laundry, kitchen and storeroom building, and a sewage lagoon. Before completion of the buildings in 1956, Miss Ara L. Morris, R.N., who had prior experience with the mentally retarded at the Marshall institution, was employed as Nurse Administrator. Miss Morris arrived at the Higginsville site in April to prepare for the admission of residents the following June. The first four days of June she conducted extensive orientation and training programs for the twenty-five employees (11-nursing service, 7-food service, 4-maintenance, 3-laundry and 2-administration.) Many of these employees were recruited from surrounding communities.

On June 4, 1956, the first residents (20 boys and 20 girls) were transferred to the Higginsville complex from Marshall. Gradually more residents were transferred until A & B cottages were filled to the capacity of 160 residents. A letter from Dr. G. A. Johns, then Superintendent of the Marshall facility, informed parents of the move to the new campus: "Miss Morris, a registered nurse, will be in charge of the unit. However, the children will be visited regularly by the medical, psychological, and social work staff located at Marshall...Every effort will be made to assure a satisfactory adjustment of your child in his new surroundings."

Visiting hours were set up on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

By the end of fiscal year 1957-58, the Higginsville State School had a full complement of children (160) and a staff of 64 employees. A primary education department opened in December

1957, with 33 children. Miss Morris pushed for the development of recreation programs in the cottages and soon professional staff were recruited for many skill training programs. Also during that period, 26 attendants earned certificates in nursing care of the mentally retarded and institutional operations.

Parents of the children at the school organized for the first time in 1959 to form a Parents Association, dedicated to fostering happiness for all residents of the school. Mr. Tom Brown, Trenton, Missouri was instrumental in organizing the group, selecting its motto, "Happiness First---All Else Follows" and served as its first president. The Association instituted many activities and was most influential with State legislators. Besides Mr. Brown, other first officers were Paul Stipp, Vice-President; Mrs. Merrill Purvis, Secretary; and Mrs. Tom Brown, Treasurer. Another parent, Mr. Vernon Debo, chairman of the constitution committee, wrote Mr. Brown in 1959:

"In the overall picture of organization the forming of a parent group such as we are starting at Higginsville will certainly take considerable time and thought on the part of all of us. There will be trial, and error. I am sure there will be times when you will be discouraged but I can assure you that the Lord willing, we will all live to see the day when this is a wonderful working organization."

In 1958, \$1,500,000 was appropriated by the State for construction of three additional cottages, (C-D-E), and site work. By the spring of 1960, Higginsville had grown to a population of 347 students and was operating quite independently of the Marshall complex. Programming had expanded to include extensive training in academic, vocational, recreation and job skills.

Area supervisors were assigned to various shifts for more complete staff coverage and supervisors were assigned in each of the five cottages.

The present administration building, what used to be the old Confederate Hospital, was then being used for the education program, medical unit and administration office. Eventually, medical services expanded to include a staff of several nurses, and a part-time doctor and dentist.

A final appropriation for construction was passed by the legislature in 1960 for \$1,275,000. With this money, an educational building, named the B. E. Ragland Building, and F Cottage, named after C. Rouss Gallup, then Missouri Department of Public Health and Welfare Director, was constructed. Governor John Dalton presided at a special dedication ceremony in November of 1964 for the two buildings.

Higginsville's education program was acclaimed by many to be very innovative and unique at educating the mentally retarded. No other State facility at this time had such a wide ranging education set-up. The late B. W. Sheperd, then Director of Training Centers for the Mentally Retarded, Department of Education, told Miss Morris: "This is the finest educational program I've seen for trainable mentally retarded children in the State."

Through the constant efforts of the Higginsville Parents Association, an indoor natatorium was constructed next to the education building in 1968. The pool, complete with locker rooms and hair dryers, was also the first of its type for a State facility.

By 1960, Higginsville had reached full capacity at 400 and was termed "the Cadillac of State institutions" by many who knew the beautiful campus, qualified staff and innovative programs.

A milestone for the Higginsville State School-Hospital came on July 1, 1970 when it separated from the Marshall State School, to become a distinct institution with its own administrative staff. Legislation passed in 1969, legally separated the two facilities and has enabled the Higginsville school to hold a unique role in serving Missouri's handicapped residents.

Today the Higginsville State School-Hospital continues to improve upon its staff and programs. This year, the estimated budget will run over the \$4,000,000 mark -- all a very necessary part in providing total care and training for its 355 youngsters.

In his last visit to the Higginsville facility before his death, the late Donald Cox, Assistant Director of Special Education, Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, commented again on the uniqueness of the institution: "...Higginsville has an excellent teaching staff with strong supervision, good equipment to work with, the residents are all working in individualized instructional programs, and an excellent job is being done. It appears to me that the staff assembled have the expertise to do an outstanding job in screening, diagnosis, planned intervention and/or instruction, and evaluation. We are indeed fortunate to have a place such as Higginsville for our handicapped citizens."

